

Bargaining Update: mea & MESPA

Published by Mesa Education Association ♦ Mesa Education Support Personnel Association

April 21, 2010

More about Budget Options

Meet-and-Confer sessions for MEA and MESPA did not take place this week. All parties needed additional time to work on their respective issues and to continue to analyze budget implications. Both MEA and MESPA have received many calls asking about the budget options. We hope that this newsletter will help to clarify what may happen.

Options based on Prop 100. Please understand that major budget decisions hang on the May 18 special sales tax election – Prop 100. If the measure passes – and we’re all working hard to make that happen – then the district will still have to impose some budget cuts with Plan A. But those reductions are somewhat manageable. If it fails, Plan B cuts will be much deeper. All of these options are the Superintendent’s recommendations. None of this has been approved by the Governing Board.

Plan A Options. Here are effects of Plan A that would be most obvious to most employees: A salary freeze is likely for the second year in a row. We may face two unpaid furlough days, which is about the same as a 1% salary reduction. The number of classified staff at junior highs would be reduced, as would the number of employees in the district’s business and support departments. And here’s a real aggravation: personal appliances (like small refrigerators) would no longer be allowed at schools.

Plan B Cuts. If the sales tax measure fails, then the district will have to cut an additional \$25 million, on top of all the other cuts made in recent years. The recommended options include: a 20% to 40% reduction in the number of elementary classroom aides; doing away with elementary art specialists and “transferring” that program to regular classroom teachers; reducing elementary PE to one day per week; eliminating the elementary counseling program; reducing custodial service to three times per week; increasing all class sizes by reducing the total number of teaching contracts; imposing the “alternative” substitute plan; imposing a 5% across-the-board salary reduction; and imposing one additional furlough day – for a total of three.

Staff Reductions. The cuts under Plan B would require a net loss of many more employees – both teachers and classified. Involuntary RIFs would be necessary with most of the Plan B recommendations. Because those options might be necessary if Prop 100 fails, the district recently sent letters to all teachers, in order to satisfy legal requirements for teacher contract notification. The letters are not RIF notices – but they should serve as fair warning that no one has guaranteed job security.

Next Meetings: MEA Meet-and-Confer will resume Monday, April 26, and MESPA will be back in session on Wednesday, April 28. In both instances, the Association wants to talk about our priorities for salaries and benefits in these tough times.

On the back: What we’re doing in the campaign to pass Prop 100

MEA & MESPA Teams.

For MEA, representing certificated staff

Kirk Hinsey, Teacher, Powell JH, Chairperson
Val Angus, Professional Development
Joelyn Hilton, Ed. Tech., Trainer
Alex Reyes, Teacher, Westwood HS
Jennifer Tellez-Carson, Teacher, Entz
Will Moore, AEA Organizational Consultant

For MESPA, representing classified staff

Rich Berumen, Operations, Chairperson
Liz Dean, Instructional Assistant, SHARP
Deb Dutra, Secretary, Westwood HS
Gilbert Vargas, Trainer/driver, Stapley Trans.
Frank Hunter, Facilities Asst., Kerr
Will Moore, AEA Organizational Consultant

Campaign for Prop 100

Unless you live on the moon, you know that the May 18 special election will affect your job with the school district. Early balloting begins later this week. If the measure fails, we will face the hard circumstances laid out in Plan B. So what are we doing about it?

MEA and MESPA are part of a statewide campaign, led by the state's largest public employee organization, the Arizona Education Association. Many people and organizations support Prop 100 – including the Governor and the State Chamber of Commerce. But AEA and our local chapters are supplying the majority of volunteers.

Here are some local examples:

- During the week of April 12, MEA and MESPA distributed 500 yard signs throughout our community. We soon will have 300 more signs, and almost every one of them is already spoken for.
- On Saturday, April 17, fourteen Association volunteers walked the neighborhood near Pomeroy Elementary, leaving door-hangers, putting up signs, and talking to voters. The response was overwhelmingly positive.
- Additional neighborhood walks are planned for central and east Mesa. Many Association Reps are making door-hangers available for those employees who want to walk their home neighborhoods.
- Hundreds of *Yes on 100* “window signs” have been distributed by MEA site reps.
- The MEA & MESPA PAC has contributed \$3,000 to the campaign and is ready to commit more as necessary.

And coming up:

As vote-by-mail begins, we will soon begin to telephone likely voters, reminding them to send in their ballots, marked YES for Prop 100. If you want to help in this effort, sign up with your MEA or MESPA site rep. You will be given a call list prepared by AEA. You can make the calls from your own home. Then return the completed list within the required time frame.

And finally:

If you're not a member of the Association, now is the time to join. Support the organization that supports you!

